

REMARKS

By the present amendment, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 4, 6, 9, 10, and 14, and cancelled Claims 2, 3, 5, 13 and 18-21. Claims 1, 4, 6-12 and 14-17 remain pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 10 are independent claims.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended to their representative during the personal interview held March 15, 2005. The present response summarizes the substance of the interview. At the interview a proposed amendment and a model of the invention were presented for discussion. Proposed amended Claim 1 set forth a hand tool for immobilizing a T-connector having an elongated handle portion, and a head portion. The elongated handle portion includes a grip end, and a snap connection. The head portion is removably affixed to the handle portion by the snap connection. The head portion has a means for capturing two aligned nuts of a T-connector. The means for capturing two aligned nuts of the T-connector comprises a pair of rigid claws, each claw including an interior surface sized to capture a corresponding one of the two aligned nuts of the T-connector thereby preventing lateral movement of the two aligned nuts. Proposed amended Claim 10 set forth a T-connector holding tool including a handle, and a head. The handle has a grip portion and a mounting lug extending from the grip portion. The mounting lug includes a cylindrical end portion. The head has a cylindrical body with a bore defined therein. The mounting lug is removably inserted into the bore in order to attach the head to the handle. The head also has first and second claws attached to the cylindrical body in a parallel, spaced relationship. Each of the claws has a pair of jaws dimensioned and configured for simultaneously gripping coaxially aligned nuts of a T-connector in order to prevent rotation

of the T-connector when adjusting a nut on stem of the T-connector. Arguments were advanced that the applied prior art did not meet these limitations as set forth in the proposed amended independent claims. In addition, a model of the claimed embodiment was exhibited and elaboration of the specific components was set forth. The Examiner indicated that the model helped his understanding of the claimed embodiments. Also, the Examiner stated that upon filing a formal response, all amendments and arguments would be considered. No commitment of allowability was given.

Claims 18-21 were held withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner as being directed to a non-elected invention, a method of tightening a third nut of a T-connector. Accordingly, it is proposed herein that the instant claims be cancelled to expedite the prosecution of the present case. However, it should be noted that under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 121 Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application directed to the non-elected subject matter.

The indication by the Examiner in the Office Action mailed December 22, 2004, that Claims 13 and 14 were allowable over the prior art of record is noted with appreciation.

In the recent Office Action the Examiner rejected Claims 6-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicant has amended Claims 1, 6, and 9 to provide proper antecedent basis for the claim language. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 6-9, as amended, meet the specific requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

In the recent Office Action mailed December 22, 2004 the Examiner rejected Claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Clark. Claims 3-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark in view of one or more of DeVrou, and McBride.

Applicant will advance arguments hereinbelow to illustrate the manner in which the presently claimed invention is patentably distinguishable from the cited and applied prior art. Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

The applied prior art reference to Clark discloses a tobacco barn implement for hanging and relocating tobacco-loaded slats in a tobacco barn. The implement has an elongated handle, and permanently attached to one end thereof is a bifurcated shank. At each of the opposing ends of the bifurcated shank is a crook. Each crook is in the form of metallic arc of substantially 245°. Assuming *arguendo* that the crooks are structurally capable of capturing and a pair of aligned nuts of a T-connector, Clark fails to anticipate the limitations of independent Claim 1, as amended. Specifically, Claim 1 recites that the head portion is removably attached to the handle portion by a snap connection. Applicants respectfully submit that Clark does not anticipate independent Claim 1, as amended. Applicants respectfully request that this ground of rejection be withdrawn.

The applied prior art reference to DeVrou discloses a hand grip for socket wrench extensions so that the extensions can be manually grasped and turned when the work and its environment is such that the standard ratchet handle cannot be used. DeVrou also discloses that the hand grip for socket wrench extensions adaptable to fit extensions of varying lengths. In addition, DeVrou discloses a hand grip for a socket wrench extension formed of flexible material and is slidably and tightly received upon the extension so that the extension can be grasped by the hand grip and turned manually. There is no motivation nor guidance found in either Clark or DeVrou, alone or in the combination alleged by the Examiner that would have led one having ordinary skill in the art to arrive at the structure recited in Applicants independent Claims 1 and 10, as amended. In addition, the alleged combination

of these references, as suggested by the examiner would destroy the purpose of the bifurcated shank permanently attached to the handle. Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of the applied prior art references to Clark and DeVrou do not render the independent Claims 1 and 10, along with their respective dependent claims obvious. Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of this particular ground of rejection.

The applied prior art reference to McBride discloses a wrench having removably attached handle and head portions. The similarities of the instant embodiments and the applied prior art reference to McBride end here. The handle receiving holes in the head of McBride are ovular in shape, likewise, the ends of the handle portion are tapered so as to be readily "tapped firmly into" the holes of the head. McBride, when considered with Clark and DeVrou, as suggested by the Examiner does not obviously meet the limitations of instantly claimed embodiments. Applicants respectfully submit that there is no guidance nor motivation found in any of the applied prior art references that one having ordinary skill in the art would have found the instant claims obvious. Applicants respectfully urge the withdrawal of this, and all other particular grounds of rejection.

Applicants have amended independent Claim 10 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of Claim 13. Applicant submits that the incorporation of only the subject matter of Claim 13 into Claim 10 defines this claimed embodiment over the applied prior art.

Applicant has amended independent Claims 1 and 10 to more specifically define the embodiments of the present application in light of the applied prior art of record, and submitted arguments pointing out the inapplicability of the cited and applied prior art references of record. Applicants respectfully submit that for at least these reasons, Claims 1,

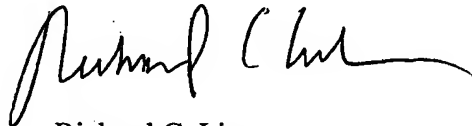
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4, 6-12, and 15-17 are allowable over the prior art applied of record. Reconsideration of the claims in light of the amendments and for the foregoing reasons is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. If such is not the case, the Examiner is requested to kindly contact the undersigned in an effort to satisfactorily conclude the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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